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April 23, 1968

His Excellency The Governor
Spiro T. Agnew
Executive Department
Annapolis, Maryland 21404

Dear Governor Agnew:

After reading and hearing your castigation of Negro leadership involving the disturbances, I felt that it is my civic responsibility to let you know my position and thoughts concerning your statements.

It is agreed by all right thinking Americans that burning and looting do not solve problems but by the results shown, create more problems for all.

I know that in the ghetto with the worst conditions conceivable, you have a majority of right thinking black Americans who are doing their best to live according to the dictates of the law. This I will expound on a little later.

My main concern at this time is to talk a little concerning your remarks addressed to the Negro leaders. I can not accept your remarks due to the fact that during the disturbances many of the leaders stayed up all night trying to quell the disturbances and you felt that they ran or shrieked their civic responsibilities. This statement was totally unfair. I know you stated that the majority of the telegrams you received were complimenting you concerning your remarks. However, it involves simple mathematics to prove that there are more White people in Maryland than Black people. Therefore, the number of telegrams and letters you received could possibly represent the majority of bigots in the State of Maryland. I can't think of one Black person that agreed with your remarks.

I think we can prove that Maryland has many bigots who truly believe that Black people don't need fair employment or equal employment. There are many White people who believe that slum housing is okay for Black people. There are too many Whites that believe Negroes don't need to be educated. You, I am quite sure, are aware of the many inequities that exist in Maryland and you have stated publicly that you were willing to work to eliminate the inequities that confine a large portion of the Black community to second class citizenship status.

I think it is imperative that the militants be given a chance to be heard. It is very obvious that the Negro leaders that you castigated and their following were

Still standing

not looting or throwing fire bombs. However, the Negro who happens to live in the ghetto is saying something. The Negro in the ghetto is trying to tell you and all Americans that he is tired of broken promises and exploitation. I think you have made the mistake of using "I" too much. The emphasis should stress "We". It is impossible for you or anyone to appoint leadership for Negroes and especially Negroes that happen to live in the ghetto. Leadership is earned by hard work and being sympathetic toward certain problems that need to be solved and making vigorous and concentrated efforts to solve the problems that affect the lives of the people you serve or lead.

To tell you as plain as I can, you have not developed a dialogue with the leaders and the people that live in the ghetto. The Negro men that you castigated did not, and cannot represent the people in the ghetto. The people in the ghetto feel that they have leadership and don't appreciate you giving or delegating leadership for them.

I could write many paragraphs, however, being that I try to be a rational and practical thinking man, I am willing to attempt to comment on some of the proposals to prevent rebellions by unfortunate people that happen to be Black. The recommendations I will suggest have been suggested many times before.

JOBS. Any man that has a decent job and has a sense of pride in his job and receives an adequate salary is not inclined to throw fire bombs.

The trade unions have to stop dragging their feet whenever they are supposed to hire and train Black people.

ATTITUDES. I think you and the White community have to wake up and recognize that the Black community has emotions and will give vent to their emotions constructively if allowed to.

I think you can do a very good job of changing attitudes if you tell your White friends that Black people are going to be respected. There isn't any special psychology needed to deal with Black people. Simply treat all people the way you would like to be treated.

When I say attitudes, I mean that White attitudes have to be changed to accept Black people as human beings and brothers.

You may think differently, but the majority of Negroes love this country and they are ready to die for this country. Many are willing to give up their lives to make this country realize that there is much sickness that must be eliminated for the good of the country. Many members of the Black community, especially the younger ones, realize that this country has had a long history of violence. They know that this country fought a revolutionary war because of taxation without representation. Therefore, many of the young Negroes feel justified giving their lives in order to achieve dignity, employment protection, elimination of discrimination and satisfactory representation by their elected governmental officials.

EDUCATION. Provide and staff the schools of our city with adequate equipment and superior teachers in the ghetto schools. Let us face the cold fact that the ghetto

schools, as a whole, don't have the proper equipment; have inferior buildings and poorly trained teachers. Initiate the Head Start Programs.

GRIEVANCES. Set up offices or places where the ghetto residents can air their grievances. Investigate and act or explain which action will be taken to eliminate the grievance.

Prevent exploitation by many stores that sell commodities at a much higher price than the commodity is worth. Enforce the Food and Drugs Law. Negroes pay more for their medicine than their White brothers. In the ghettos, in most cases, the meats are not up to par to government regulations or standards.

The scales in many stores should be checked for accuracy. In many cases the scales are off anywhere from two ounces to eight ounces.

There are many more things I would like to say, however, it would be impossible to reduce it to writing. I will say that I am willing to do my part to eliminate discrimination and help "all" Americans participate and enjoy the American dream.

In my conclusion I would like to state that I talked with one fellow who lived in the ghetto and he told me that the reason or one of the reasons he participated in the disturbance.

I asked him why he broke into the corner store and looted. He stated that he broke into the store and robbed because "that honkey owner had robbed many black people each and every day for years under the protection of the law". Therefore, he felt the system that protected the storekeeper did not protect him from the unscrupulous storekeeper who was committing robbery each and everyday without a gun.

Yours sincerely,

Floyd B. Adams

Floyd B. Adams

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Civil Rights - Speech - Against

May 15, 1968

MAY 23 1968

Honorable Floyd B. Adams
2541 Kirk Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21218

Dear Floyd:

Your letter of April 23 has not escaped my attention. The delay in answering it, for which I apologize, results from my desire to respond personally to many of the letters received on this subject. I appreciate your thoughtfulness and candor and I accept the criticism as in the spirit of constructive purpose. To that extent, we have at least embarked on the dialogue which you feel has been lacking.

We have no disagreement on the subject of the ghetto and the problems which it poses. These problems--for poor black and white alike--are the most serious domestic problems we face at all levels of government. Lasting solutions must be found and, in my view, those solutions are most likely to result from a cooperative endeavor between government initiative and private initiative. To that end I am and shall remain dedicated, as I am sure you are.

The principal thrust of my remarks was not directed to choosing leadership in the Negro community, but to point out the terrible consequences of responsible leadership giving way to irresponsible persons in times of urgent need and imminent crisis. I mark as irresponsible those, be they black or white, who preach and perpetrate violence as an antidote for what they deem to be wrongs in our society. In so doing, they serve no end but the perpetration of yet another wrong. As you correctly point out, constructive ends are not achieved by destructive deeds.

Honorable Floyd B. Adams

May 15, 1968

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I stand--alone, if need be--upon my personal conviction and the lessons of history, that nothing of enduring value can be achieved under our system of government except through the processes of an orderly socceity. Our system, as few others do, contemplates and makes possible the changes that are needed. However much you may disagree with either the time or tone of my remarks, this I believe and this, I hope, you believe. To me, that is what it was all about.

Sincerely,

CSB:STA:bcw